The

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

No. 150 DECEMBER, 1919. PRICE THREE HALFPENCE
2s. per annum post free

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Notes of the Month.

The reports which have reached us of the Conference of American Unitarians at Baltimore, when the Centenary of the delivery of Dr. Channing's famous sermon was celebrated, indicate a series of very inspiring and memorable gatherings. The different speakers seem to have realised the call of a great opportunity and sought to deal with the vital truths of practical religion. The deepening of the spiritual life of the churches, the social expression of the religious spirit, the co-ordination of churches and institutions in order to make more effective and systematic their common work—all these important matters were to the fore and received earnest attention. Nor was it the ministers alone who contributed to the earnest awakening of enthusiasm and endeavour. The Laymen's Union, with its branches in different centres, is a live organisation, and with men like ex-President Taft as leaders, is determined to do great things for the great cause it represents. We cannot but regret that we have no corresponding organisation to attract and equip the laity of our own church. There is a great opportunity here no less than in America.

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Among the ministers who took part in the American meetings we would specially mention two. The Rev. Henry Gow, of Hampstead, London, attended as British representative, and preached to a very large and representative congregation a most appropriate and impressive sermon. Striking the right note, and making felicitous reference to Dr. Channing's great sermon of 1819, at Baltimore, Mr Gow appears to have won the affectionate admiration of his American hearers. Meadville College signalised his visit to America by presenting Mr. Gow with the honorary degree of D.D. A second important speaker was the Rev. Louis C. Cornish, who visited several of our congregations in the North of Ireland last summer. In a very interesting address he gave impressions of his visit to us, and also of his visits to England, Wales, and Scotland. He made grateful reference to the welcome he had received, and apparently carried back to America a store of clear impressions and happy memories. If he found it congenial to be amongst us, we too have grateful recollection of his kindly and interesting personality.

But the practical question arises—Cannot we here do something to strengthen our bond of fellowship, and seize the opportunity for "peaceful penetration?" In England, now the war is over, the Triennial Conferences are to be resumed with a series of meetings at Leeds. These meetings, we trust, will be duly attended by our ministers and laymen. But we are thinking more particularly of our own Irish meetings. It must be admitted that as at present constituted they only touch a mere section of our Non-Subscribing constutuency, and do not generate any widespread fervour or enthusiasm. We are aware that certain routine business must be done, and that we can only count upon the ministers and a very few laymen to do it. Apart from business meetings, we should have gatherings that will draw in and enlist the services of the younger members of our congregations. There is yet time for the General Purposes Committee of the Non-Subscribing Church to give earnest thought to this question, so that next June we shall not merely mark time or register past business, but instil enthusiasm and energetic resolve for some new and greater work.

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Those of our readers who are interested in the condition of Unitarianism elsewhere will view with sympathetic concern what is reported about the Hungarian Unitarian Church and its members. A very interesting article appeared in "The Inquirer" of November 22nd, giving the impressions received by the Rev. W. H. Drummond in Vienna, Buda-Pesth and Kolosvar. According to the writer the liberty we Unitarians prize so deeply, and for which so many sacrifices were necessarily made, is seriously threatened in Hungary. The land made sacred to many of us by the martyrdom of Francis David is now a land desolate and terror-stricken as a result of Roumanian oppression and persecution. The steps which have been taken to bring the facts before representatives of the Peace Conference in Paris will, we earnestly hope, have some speedy effect, and relieve our co-religionists from their sad oppression.

The Centenary of the birth of George Eliot on November 22 called forth many literary appreciations of that gifted woman and her writings. There are surely few lovers of literature who have not at some time or other come under her powerful spell. The very titles of her books summon before us the forms of characters like Mr. Gilfil, Adam Bede, Silas Marner, Tom and Maggie Tulliver, Romola, the immortal Mrs. Poyser, and many others. How appropriate still are the conclusions of Adam Bede:—"I've seen pretty clear ever since I was a young man, as religion's something else besides doctrines and notions. I look at it as if its doctrines was like finding names for your feelings, so as you can talk of 'em when you've never known 'em, just as a man may talk o' tools when he knows their names, though he's never so much as seen 'em, still less handled 'em." We refrain from the temptation of quoting further, but it would be possible to glean richly from really beautiful passages emphasising religion as practical, sympathetic human service as well as the expression of the heart's deepest feelings. The genius which could depict with such deep insight a Dinah Morris was itself essentially religious. We can only hope that the Centenary celebrations will prompt many readers to turn again to the source of deep satisfaction which George Eliot's writings represent.

* *

We approach another Christmas season and all its sacred associations with grateful hearts, and the fervent wish for "Peace on earth, good-will towards men." How much more bright the present time and its prospect than it was even a year ago! We sincerely trust that its joyous message may enter into the homes of our readers, fraught with richest blessings for them and theirs. May also the spirit of Christ descend upon our congregations and their institutions and permeate more and more every department of our Church life.

The preparations for Christmas trade at the Depository are on a much larger scale this year than during the war. There is a considerable improvement in the picture books shown, though the prices are a little higher than before. The calendars seem prettier than usual, and it is surprising to find Christmas cards of such quality offered at such low prices. Indeed, moderate prices seem to rule, and there is no sign that customers are asked more than is absolutely necessary. It is, therefore, advisable that our people should visit the Depository before going elsewhere to do their Christmas shopping, as, by so doing, they will not only help the work of our denomination, but will, incidentally, be able to make their purchases more cheaply. The diaries and booklets are also ready, and make suitable and seasonable gifts.

"UNBIND THE TEMPLE."

"The Interpreter" of July, 1919, contains an article by Dr. Wright, of Queen's College, Cambridge, headed "Destroy this Temple." The alleged utterance of these words was one of the charges made against Christ in the trial before the High Priest and the Sanedrin.

The article goes into a great deal of detail concerning the use of these words. There is a comment in John's Gospel: "But he spake of the temple of the body," which has been responsible, however apposite to subsequent events it may have been, for calling away attention from the real force of the word used, which is not "destroy," but simply "loose," "untie," "unbind." In the same sense the Baptist said: "The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose."

Metaphorically, it is used of our Lord's conduct towards the Sabbath. The Law of Moses had "tied" the Sabbath; the Rabbis had tied it still tighter with their rules. Our Lord was accused of "breaking" it—literally, "loosing it," setting it free from restrictions, giving men greater liberty to deal with it. Dr. Wright claims that this was really what Christ meant with reference to the Temple. "Unbind the Temple," "Set it free," especially from sacrifices, liberate it from all that is unworthy of the worship of a Heavenly Father. "Unbind the Temple, and 'in three days,' that is in a very short time, the true Temple will be established among you."

Christ came to set at liberty, and the bruised reed he did not break, and the smoking flax he did not quench. Where there was possibility of reform, where there was much of good that still remained, he was willing to encourage it

The degrading sacrifices which turned the Temple into a slaughter-house were responsible for the traffic which made the outer court like a cattle market, and roused his holy indignation, before which dealers and money-changers were awed and fled He would cleanse the Temple of everything derogatory to the worship of God. A stately ritual, the altar of incense, the choir of Levites, all that was beautiful, he would have allowed to stand. Prophets had denounced the sacrifices of lambs and bullocks. God did not delight in these, the sacrifice of a broken and contrite spirit, true, sincere worship, He did not despise.

Set religion free from its trammels was surely what Christ meant, though Dr. Wright does not go so far. Unbind religion from its cerements of orthodoxy, and let it come forth from the tomb quickened into newness of life. Discern between "religion" and "theology," recognise that the former is eternal, that the latter is only temporary, and while in its own way necessary to satisfy the mind of man tends to crystallise, becomes rigid, and a mould of the mind which needs must be broken like a fetter.

The end of one era had come, and with it a new one had begun, the time for ushering in the Kingdom had arrived, the form must give way to reality.

Another article by Dr. Bindley in the same magazine maintains that the expression used by Christ in his trial before the High Priest, "The Coming

of the Son of Man on a cloud with great glory," is a symbolic expression from the Book of Daniel, and only means "The end of one era and the beginning of a new one."

These two passages when taken together are especially appropriate for the present time, which undoubtedly is the close of one era and the beginning of another, when it is necessary to "Unbind the Temple," to prove to the world that whatever happens to those things associated with religion, however Scripture may be affected by the Science of Criticism, whatever sifting there may be as to the rituals and traditions, religion itself remains the eternal rock amid all storms and changes. ULLIN.

THE LATE ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

AN APPRECIATION.

BY REV. ALEX. O. ASHWORTH.

And Ella Wheeler Wilcox is dead, and this world is greatly poorer every way by the irreparable loss. It is poorer because she was a producer of just such elements as are real and add to the actual wealth of the lives of the people. She purified, enriched, and elevated thought and feeling and life in every one who read her books. She was a rich gift of God to all, for she dealt with matters which are of infinite value to all, and while those who have read what she wrote have been enriched thereby, all others, even those who have read nothing of what she has written, and others still who never heard of her, have received a legacy of incalculable value from the influence of the records of her pen. She has made an indelible impression upon her own and many future generations which is world-wide. She belonged to America, but she is an all-world benefactress, and her exquisite poetry, full of deepest thought, is an illimitable power for good and for all time.

Amongst her works of poetry are :— "Forms of Pleasure," "Forms of Passion," "Forms of Power," "The Kingdom of Love," "Three Women," "Forms of Cheer," "Poems of Inspiration," "Poems of Peace," "Poems of Love," and "Maurine."

It would be quite impossible to give even to a limited extent in a short article any adequate idea of the true greatness and value of the literary productions of this authoress, but what one feels after perusing portions of her works is the characteristic simplicity and naturalness of her style and diction. She deals with the deepest problems of human feeling, experience and life with an almost inimitable penetration and perspicacity and continually reveals in her lines the most intimate understanding and comprehension of the deepest depths of feeling and their intricacies and ramifications and effects on life. And not less does she repeatedly and successfully illustrate the delicacy and sensitiveness of understanding in which the greatest and purest mental enjoyment and bliss find their surest foundation. Her poetry too gives voice to the aspirations of the genuine democrat, and she is in strong sympathy with social progress :—

"The Universal Republic, where worth, not birth, is royal,
Where the lowliest born may climb on a self-made ladder to fame,
Where the highest and proudest born if he be not true and loyal
Shall find no masking title to cover and gild his shame."

She pictures the disadvantages of apartness or aloofness and illustrates with potency the blessing and reward of individual contribution to the common good and happiness of others :

"Sing and the hills will answer ;
Sigh, it is lost on the air.
The echoes bound
To a joyful sound,
But shrink from voicing care."

The future to her is full of hope as she speaks of "the coming man" :—

"For out of the strife which woman
Is passing through to-day
A man that is more than human
Shall yet be born, I say—
A man in whose pure spirit
No dross of self will lurk ;
A man who is strong to cope with wrong,
A man who is proud to work.
A man with hope undaunted
Shall come when he is most wanted,
Shall come at the needed hour ;
He shall silence the din and clamour
Of clan disputing with clan,
And toil's long fight with purse proud might
Shall triumph through this man."

She is cosmopolitan in her religious sympathies, as all good Unitarians should be :—

" All roads that lead to God are good—
What matters it your faith or mine ?
Both centre at the goal divine
Of Love's eternal brotherhood.

What matters that one found his Christ
In rising sun or burning fire,
If faith within him did not tire ?
His longing for the truth sufficed.

Before our modern hell was brought
To edify the modern world,
Full many a hate-filled soul was hurled
In lakes of fire by its own thoughts.

A thousand creeds have come and gone,
But what is that to you or me ?
Creeds are but branches of a tree—
The root of love lives on and on.

Though branch by branch proves withered wood,
The root is warm with precious wine :
Then keep your faith and leave me mine—
All roads that lead to God are good."

Hear what she says of education :—

" There is no school that disciplines the mind
And broadens thought like contact with mankind.
The college prisoned Greyhead who has burned
The midnight lamp and book bound knowledge learned
Is but a babe in wisdom when compared
With some unlettered wand'rer who has shared
The hospitalities of every land :—
Made man his study and the world his college,
And gained this grand epitome of knowledge.
' Each human being has a heart and soul,
And self is but an atom of the whole ' !
I hold he is best learned and most wise
Who best and most can love and sympathise.
Book wisdom makes us vain and self-contained ;
Our bonded minds go round in little grooves,
But constant friction with the world removes
These iron foes to freedom, and we rise
To grander heights, and all untrammelled find
A better atmosphere and clearer skies,
And through its broadened realm no longer chained
Thought travels freely, leaving self behind."

What wise words she writes about marriage :—

" Who weds for love alone may not be wise,
Who weds without it angels must despise ;
Love and respect together must combine
To render marriage holy and divine ;
And lack of either, sure as fate, destroys
Continuation of the nuptial joys,
And brings regret and gloomy discontent."

But much as I am impelled, I must perforce in consideration of your space not continue my humble effort at admiration of a mind so full of purest thought and loftiest sentiment—a mind which has so largely helped to bless this world, and I conclude with an extract—this from her most delightful novel, " Maurine," written in lovely poetry. Those who cannot find time to read all she has written will make time, even if stolen from the hours due to sleep, to read this bewitching and charmingly conceived and life-like production. The quotation is from the dying speech of a mother to her lady friend, to whom she commits the guardianship and training of her soon-to-be orphaned baby girl :—

" Teach her to . . . keep my memory green
In her young heart, and lead her in her youth
To drink from th' eternal fount of truth ;
Vex her not with sectarian discourse,
Nor strive to teach her piety by force ;
Ply not her mind with harsh and narrow creeds,
Nor frighten her with an avenging God
Who rules His subjects with a burning rod ;
But teach her that each mortal simply needs
To grow in hate of hate and love of love
To gain a kingdom in the courts above."

A Book for the Month.

" GOD AND THE WORLD."

All who remember the brilliant lecture given by Dr. Mellone at our last annual meetings will welcome his little book entitled : " God and the World." Originally given as lectures to lay preachers, the eight chapters deal with the meaning and grounds of belief in God. The conflict between Science and Religion, which was at its height in the latter half of the last century, is shown to have been largely due to misuse of the Bible. The old argument from design and the attempt to reconcile our newly gained knowledge with the Genesis account of creation have alike broken down. The theologians were in the wrong, but they have admitted their mistake, and there is now little or no antagonism between Science and Religion as far as they are

concerned. Dr. Mellone makes a good point when he bids us remember that men of science are as human as theologians, " their achievements in the last century caused more than one of them to lose his head." We must distinguish between scientific knowledge and scientific speculation. Leaving speculation on one side we have the fundamental conception of the universe. " We shall see that the definition of the universe required by science is the beginning of the definition of God required by religion." Thus we are led up to a quotation from Herbert Spencer, " amid mysteries which become more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the one absolute certainty, that we are ever in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed." This is the God of Science. The question now is, what further may be known of the character of the Infinite and Eternal Energy which is the " one absolute certainty," Science reveals infinite Power; Religion, as Browning held, reveals infinite Love. With great skill and fine lucidity Dr. Mellone leads us along this line of thought, and incidentally we may note the aptness and suggestiveness of his quotations from Spencer, Huxley and others. Science itself would be impossible without an initial act of faith, faith in uniform and inviolable law. But the Infinite and Eternal Energy is not only rational it is also purposive. By its purpose it must be judged. Science and history alike contribute to our knowledge of the underlying purpose. The very minds that discover scientific knowledge and speculate on that knowledge are products of the Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed. Whence come these minds, and the ideals, the hopes and aspirations of human kind? " The work of Christ and of thousands of Christlike men and women are facts. They are genuine redeeming forces in the world; and to say that they are merely human and nothing more, is to beg the whole question. This is where the materialistic or atheistic explanation of the world breaks down. It cannot find a cause adequate to produce such effects. We are at last brought to the problem of Evil. Within the compass of a small chapter it is impossible to deal adequately with so great a problem, but here as throughout the book Dr. Mellone thinks and writes clearly on a difficult theme and opens up avenues of thought along which inquiring minds may profitably travel further. Packed into small space there is in this book much to help those who feel the need of a restatement of the grounds of belief in God. Its author would be the last to claim that it covers the whole ground, but along its own lines it is wonderfully clear and concise. We commend it most cordially to our readers.

THE GREAT HUSH.

Abroad over all the land a brief space of two minutes was appointed for a solemn silence and grateful remembrance of the glorious dead. It was the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the anniversary of that moment when the guns ceased fire and the armistice was begun.

From thousands of hearts the silent prayer ascended: " Eternal peace, grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them."

It was a moment of one living communion between the seen and the unseen, a communion of all holy souls. It was a moment when the eternal was brought into the life of time, and that is what religion means.

In Muhammadan countries, as the call to prayer sounded from the minaret of the mosque, there is the same sudden cessation from all activity to kneel in prayer, and the whole population does it.

A quiet, forceful change would soon manifest itself in our own community if mentally, say at noon, we called to mind the Unity of God. " One God and Father, who is over all and in all and through all." " I am in the Father and the Father is in me." " I and the Father are one."

Soon in our hearts we should know the birth of the Christ-child, and as

the years passed that Holy Child would "grow and wax strong."

"We should be transformed into His image from glory to glory."

"Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
If He's not born in thee, thy soul is all forlorn."

ULLIN.

SOCIAL SERVICE NOTES.

[The Editor has courteously placed the space under this heading at the disposal of the N.S.P.C.I. Union for Social Service, and the Union will supply material for it regularly every month.]

The Union for Social Service is struggling to carry on its work, but still the encouragement received is small. A public meeting was held in the Central Hall, Belfast, on 29th October, addressed by Dr. Alice Barry, of Dublin, on the subject of Public Health. Considering the interest evoked by Dr. Barry's visit when she spoke before audiences of the Women's Political League (who kindly allowed us to have first hearing of Dr. Barry), the attendance at the meeting reflects sadly on our apathy in vital social questions. Dr. John Campbell is to address us on November 26th on "The Prevention of Infectious Disease."

In conjunction with the Unity Guild, a Study Circle has been started, to meet in the Central Hall on 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month. The present subject is The Public Health Act, and at the two meetings already held we have had the help of two of the ablest folk in our city on this subject, viz., Miss Dora Mellone and Mr. R. C. Ferguson, M.A., B.Litt. Miss Vaughan is to help at the next meeting on 3rd December by telling us about Public Health work in the great town of Bradford.

By the courtesy of the Unity Guild Committee, a Social Service evening was arranged for on Wednesday, Nov. 12th, papers being read by Miss Mary M'Crea, of the Belfast Council of Social Welfare, on "The Undenominational Social Service School at Swanich," and by Rev. E. H. Pickering, M.A., on "The Christian Social Crusade." At the request of members of the Union Executive, this latter paper is published in another column. Miss M'Crea's paper was a really admirable performance, and afforded instruction in a most entertaining way.

"What is the Union doing?" is frequently asked by those who want us to achieve a success before they join. All we can say is that the Union is doing all it can in the circumstances. It arranges lectures and a study circle, it runs a girls' club, it has sent a resolution on the Housing Question to the local and national authorities, and it *would like* to organize a child welfare centre among the members of our Churches.

ERNEST H. PICKERING, *Hon. Sec.*

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

[To be used in accordance with the Scheme of Instruction for 1919, issued by the Sunday School Committee of the N.S.P.C.I.]

7th December. Samuel: the Judge. Read I. Samuel vii. Key text, I. Sam. vii. 9.

Introduction. Whilst Samuel was still a child, the Israelites were defeated by the Philistines; Eli's sons (Hophni and Phineas) were killed in the battle, and Eli died from the shock. The ark was taken, but after a while was restored to the men of Kiriath Jearim, where it abode for 20 years. All this time, apparently, the people were subject to the Philistines. Then they turned to Samuel.

Points 1. *The ark of God.* This ark was more holy to the Israelites than any altar or temple, for the two stones on which the Law of Moses was engraven were within. Note that Eleazer had to be specially sanctified (or ordained) in order to keep watch on it.

2. *Samuel's demand: repentance.* He said that the only hope for Israel was to turn away from their worship of foreign gods, and, having asked God's forgiveness, to serve him faithfully hereafter. So long as our hearts are evil we cannot make a good fight. Then

(see key text) Samuel acted the noble part of mediator by expressing the people's needs in humble prayer to God. He also offered up a sacrifice, because in those days folk believed that God demanded it. They were right in a way. But the sacrifice God demands is a sacrifice that means a real giving up on our part. The hardest things to give up are self-will, selfish pleasures, and our most cherished possessions. But if we will not give these up then we cannot prove that we really desire to serve God. The little girl who gave up her one and cherished flower-pot, with its blooming lilies, to another little girl—a cripple who could not leave her room—was making a real sacrifice.

3. *The Philistines' stratagem.* They tried to take the Israelites unaware and slaughter them whilst they were engaged in prayer to God. Similar incidents were frequent in the time of the Scottish Covenanters. They, too, sought what they believed was the only worship of the true God. But the Government was against them, and tried to repress them by force. Frequently the Covenanters worshipped under arms, and had to defend themselves against the soldiers who had orders to suppress their meetings.

4. *Eben-ezer. Stone of help.* Samuel impressed upon them that the victory was God's by setting up a memorial. Sometimes these heaps of stones or cairns do remind folk that a great helper is near, *e.g.*, cairns on bleak mountain tops, marking the way, which are indeed stones of help.

For elder scholars—Enlarge on comparison of God with a rock—" Rock of Ages."

December 14th. Samuel anoints the first king of Israel. Read I. Samuel x. 17-24; xii. 1-5. Key text, I. Samuel xii. 1.

Introduction. The early history of kingship is rather obscure. It seems to have originated in Israel and elsewhere in the need for a definite military chief who would have a more or less regular army under his control to ward off the country's enemies. In a way, it may be described as a device springing from lack of faith. Israel had suffered frequent disasters because they did not remain true to their national religion. Left to themselves, or even to a priest-judge like Samuel, they were continually backsliding, and so they asked for a king, who would always be a rallying point for them. So to speak, they felt safer looking towards a palace for help rather than to a temple. But if history has proved anything, it is that only as nations put spiritual forces before military can they be secure. This point was well urged by Samuel. God was help enough, he said, but since their weak faith often closed their eyes to the divine help, God in his mercy had chosen a king for them. Thus nobly did Samuel lay down his office and honours for what he felt was the urgent need of the people.

Points 1. *Saul.* In the circumstances it was natural that the first king should be a man of great physical stature and strength and ready military skill. But, like all great men, Saul was reluctant to take on the high office. He hid himself, and was *compelled* to become king. This is how we all should regard ourselves. We should not push ourselves forward to do things in order to show off; but we should be ready to do anything we can to help. Our attitude should not be " I am a clever chap, and can do anything," but rather " Whether I am clever or not, if you want my help, here it is."

2. *Samuel lays down his office.* At first some of the Israelites were reluctant to accept Saul as king, being jealous of him. But as soon as Saul had won a real victory over the Ammonites, opposition melted away, and Samuel renewed the appointment of Saul. Then (key text) he called the people to witness that he had done all he could for them, and asked them, ere he retired, to state if any man had ought against him. The old man was allowed to give up his office with a glad heart, for the unanimous declaration was that he had been fair and just in all his dealings. Then was the prophesy against the dishonest sons of Eli fulfilled—that God would raise

up a faithful priest in their stead. Samuel, the gift of God to his mother, had proved himself a divine gift to his people, because he was faithful in his duty.

21*st December. Christmas lesson.* Read Matthew ii. 1-12. Key text, Matthew ii. 2.

In this beautiful birth story, old yet ever new, there are just two points I would emphasize.

1. *The glory of the Christ-child's birth.* This glory was not revealed to all men, but, on the one hand, to the humble shepherds, and on the other, to the wise men of the East. We are concerned here with the wise men. It was because these men were so very wise, spending their lives studying the wonderful ways of God, that they were able to receive a message from the stars that a Saviour was born. As Wordsworth tells us about the birth of all children—

> "Not in entire forgetfulness,
> Not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God who is our."

The sun and moon and stars share in the birth of every child, especially then in the birth of such an one as Jesus. But whilst greedy, busy people elbowed Joseph and Mary into a stable, and knew nothing of what was lying in the manger, these *wise* men learnt all about it from a glorious star. We too should know more of God and the beauty and wonder of life if we made ourselves wiser about the glorious things on earth, in sky, and sea. The star actually told these men that a new king of the Jews was born. This bewildered them at first, for they went to the Royal Palace to find the babe. But Jesus was a new sort of king—a king of love. He came to rule a new sort of kingdom—a kingdom that can be found in every happy home, where boys and girls love one another, and which some day we hope will be found spread over the whole world. Never was Jesus more truly a king of love than when he lay, a little babe in the manger, for children draw love untold from those about them. Every little babe is, in a way, a Christ-child, because it brings love; but what we all have to do, as we grow bigger, is to follow Jesus and deserve love by our kindly deeds. Jesus was born a king of the Jews, and he died a king of the Jews and of all mankind, because he lived and died in order to spread the spirit of love.

2. *The wise men's gifts.* Although the wise men made a mistake in looking for Jesus in Herod's palace, they were wise enough when they found him in the manger to know that he was indeed a king, and so they gave him precious gifts. From this arose our custom of giving presents at Christmas, for each Christmas we celebrate the birth of the king of love, and how can we celebrate it better than by being loving to all about us, giving and receiving welcome gifts?

8th December. Review.

E. H. P.

SIX MONTHS IN A GERMAN PRISON CAMP.

By Rev. Percival Godding.

Concluded—Home!

It was true news at last. At 10 a.m. on the 30th November, 1918, we were due at the Station (Freiburg) for Constance, and thence out of Germany.

We were advised to take three or four days' provisions with us . . so as to be on the safe side (we had had sufficient experience of starving to take no chances again). We each took enough of tins of meat, fish, condensed milk and biscuits to last well over a week. We left camp about 8 a.m. Crowds lined the roads, silent and undemonstrative, save for the children, who for the last time cried out for biscuits.

A troop train slowly passed through the station, crowded with soldiers waving red flags; the engine and most of the carriages were decorated with red flags and red favours. They were all singing and cheering, but I noticed but little response from the people.

The journey was uneventful as far as Constance—on the Swiss border. There we left our train and boarded a sumptuous corridor train provided by the Swiss authorities. Half of that train was already filled with American officers and men. Our German guard—heavy looking, slouching soldiers, with their inevitable ugly big pipes—formally handed over papers of identity, etc., concerning us to the Swiss Guard. What a contrast were those Swiss Guards! The first impression was that they belonged to some opera company, so gaudily dressed were they. But so jolly and smart, moving up and down the platform as though it were a proud day for them. As indeed it was, for they had had no reason to feel kindly disposed towards their bad neighbours. But wait and I will tell you what I mean.

Just before we moved off into Swiss territory (we were ten yards from it) there was a peculiar silence. I turned to my brother officers in the carriage and said, "Won't somebody give a cheer, sing a song, scream, or do something?" Something, to me at least, seemed wrong, or something out of the ordinary seemed imminent. We even spoke in whispers. I could not understand it until . . . we slowly moved out of the station. Then I saw, heard, and understood. Just outside the station, in Switzerland, the jubilant Swiss people were waiting to receive, to welcome us. They cheered themselves hoarse, they waved flags and handkerchiefs, lining the rails, massed in the street adjacent to the line, crowding from their windows—they waved and cheered. So did we! It was a wonderful and sudden reaction. Then our engine got up steam, and we left them behind. But all Switzerland seemed bedecked with flags . . . and it is an artificial looking country—was this land of toys—like one big toy itself, with the wonderful snow-covered mountains all around it. Every little village we passed through greeted us . . . as though our passing had been advertised and they understood.

Then our guard explained. Of course, he said, we welcome you personally for your own sakes; we have always loved the British. But it is more than that to-day. You people in the islands there do not understand, cannot understand, what it means to have Germany as a neighbour. We breathe freer now—she has been beaten; she cannot be so overbearing towards us now! she may be human now in her relations. And the last four-and-a-half years has been an age of suspense for us. That is why we cheer; that is why we are proud of the Allies; that is why we welcome you. And they did welcome us. At Zurich our train waited for 15 minutes. The platform was crowded with ladies serving us with dishes of hot soup with good meat—lovely white bread. And each of us was given a linen bag containing three bars of Swiss milk chocolate, cigarettes, tooth brush and powder, and three ham sandwiches. And the next station each of us was given a large cardboard box absolutely full of rich delicacies—tins of meat, preserved fruit, sweet biscuits, tea, sugar, chocolate, cigarettes (even a tin opener), apples, and bananas. And we were asked to write a message to be cabled home—each one of us. Could they better such generosity . . . such hospitality? They must have sent about 400 cables. My message ("expect home in few days") reached as worded.

This train took us all the way to Lyons. We put up at a camp two miles outside, taken in large motors.

But the whole journey seemed like a wonderful dream, and, like a dream, crowded with details that I cannot now call to mind. At any rate, we reach Boulogne, and there boarded a small Admiralty vessel to Dover. It was a wild passage, too, and our little boat rocked and rose and fell. But, bless you, it was but dancing with joy. I saw on that passage some scores of U-boats, safely moored, so harmless, so sullen looking, so "out of it all." And the seaplanes entered into the fun of it. And another and much larger vessel of British Tommies returning was caught up and passed by our dancing little vessel. Oh, what cheers were shrieked across between us!

Then we saw, seemingly as a cloud first, but yet so true, so real, so unmistakable, the historic cliffs of Dover. "Breathes there a man with soul so dead." . . . I understood . . . we all understood. That night I slept in a real bed, beautiful blankets, after a real British four-course dinner!

Then there were certain formalities to go through, including medical examination and evidence given to Commissioners (on oath) as to our treatment, etc. Then London, Holyhead, Dublin, and Belfast. There was no train to Ballyclare that Sunday morning. . . . A brother officer kindly offered to put me up the night. What an idea—months and months in a German prison camp, twelve days now on my journey, 12 miles from home: nothing could stop me now. So, of course, I motored to the Manse, politely, but firmly, refusing.

There is one incident those prisoners will, one and all, never forget, viz., meeting their wives, children, or parents waiting for them on the doorstep.

THE CHRISTIAN SOCIAL CRUSADE.

An address delivered before the Unity Guild on 12th November, 1919, by Rev. E. H. Pickering, M.A.

By Rev. E. H. Pickering, M.A.

Some hundreds of years ago the City of Jerusalem in far-off Palestine was the Holy City of every Christian's hope; and to capture that city and restore it to Christendom was an ideal potent enough to enlist vast treasures and tens of thousands of gallant youths in various crusades. But now the area of the Holy City has so far expanded in Christian minds as to include the whole world. The task before us is not the warlike capture of a single walled city, but the occupation with Christian purposes of every inch of earth. It may be that the very vastness of our task has overwhelmed us, for the sad fact remains that with the broadening purposes of Christianity has come a general weakening of Christian influences in the world. However we may try to gloze over this fact, we cannot argue away the recent world-wide war which has brought more death, ruin, desolation, and demoralization than any previous war; we cannot argue away the economic unrest, the unscrupulous dealing, the widespread famine, and the unparalleled ravages of immorality. We are once more in the Dark Ages; and just as out of the Dark Ages of the past arose the crusade, so out of our present darkness a new crusade must arise.

No one, of course, denies that during the past century, and especially the last twenty years, there have been accomplished great reforms. But these reforms have done little to make the world better, because they have so largely been tainted with materialism and quackery. They deal almost entirely with external conditions, whereas every true Christian knows that the internal conditions matter most. Christianity's aim is to make the world better, not richer; and without Christianity there can be few, if any, reforms that will have a permanently good effect on human destiny. The Christian Churches, however, have been almost quiescent, and accordingly the world's crying evils have been left for the most part to men outside the Churches to cure. Within their powers, and according to their lights these reformers of external conditions have done much. But their work will be of no lasting value unless the Churches make their own peculiar contribution to the needs of the day. It is little short of scandal the feebleness and indifference of those who profess and call themselves Christians when confronted with the suffering, immorality, and injustice by which millions of our fellow men are thwarted and branded in their life on earth!

Says Dr. Gore, supported by the noblest men and women in the Churches, "we must change all that." The initial difficulty with which they are faced is different from that which faced the crusaders of old. These latter had to get men of different nationalities to work together: the crusaders of to-day have to get men of different sects to work together.

The Christian Social Crusade, which Dr. Gore has resigned his bishopric to inaugurate and lead, had its beginnings in the formation of social service unions in connection with the various denominations. You who are here to-night should know what a social service union is, for you all have the opportunity of belonging to one recently established in connection with our Non-Subscribing Church. But I frankly confess that your indifference has appalled me. Here you are given the opportunity of joining and strengthening the first organization established in Ireland for the definite and precise purpose of making the world about us better by the application of Christian principles, and you make no response. At one time we Non-Subscribers could boast that we were pioneers in social work. Acting in accordance with that tradition, I have endeavoured to inaugurate a properly organized scheme of social work, and find to my dismay that we no longer care about being pioneers. It looks as if we just want to be left alone, to fiddle, so to speak, whilst Rome is burning, asking nothing more of our religion than half-hearted attendance at Church, and whole-hearted zest for ephemeral pleasures. And meantime, I assure you, you modern Epicureans, the world is at the parting of the ways. We are at the beginning of epoch-making changes; not for long will this existing order endure. The upheaval has already begun, and unless mighty moral and spiritual forces are at work the result of all the changes will be certainly a different, but only dubiously, a better world.

(To be Continued).

Reports.

Comber.—The Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held in the above Church, on Sunday, October 5th. The building was very tastefully decorated with flowers and plants by the ladies of the congregation. A special feature of this year's decorations were two miniature corn-stacks built by Messrs. Frame and Montgomery, to whom great credit is due for their painstaking and successful efforts. Special music was rendered by the choir, including the anthem entitled: "The Bread of Life"—the solo being taken by Mrs. Hugh Ferguson, who sang with splendid taste and effect. Miss Andrews very efficiently presided at the organ. The preacher was the minister, the Rev. J. Glynne Davies The attendances were very satisfactory, the evening congregation being unusually large. The collections, which were in aid of the Choir Fund, were much in excess of those of last year.

* *

Crumlin.—Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held on Sunday, 19th Oct. As in other years, the church was tastefully decorated, and reminded us of the debt we owe to the Great Giver for the bountiful harvest. The congregations, as the collection indicated, were larger than usual, and included prominent members of other Churches. Rev. G. L. Phelps, of Holywood, was the preacher, and his sermons were much appreciated. The Congregation has recently decided to increase the stipend, and it is expected that there will be a generous response. In the course of the winter an effort will be made to raise money for renovation purposes.

* *

Downpatrick.—A Social Gathering of the junior members of the Church was held in the Hollymount Hall, on Thursday, 6th November. There was an excellent attendance, and a very pleasant evening was spent. Mr. Joseph Newman sang with his usual acceptance, and Mrs. Philipson contributed two or three recitations. Prior to the evening gathering the children of the Hollymount Summer Sunday School were entertained to tea. On the following Tuesday, Armistice Day, an interesting wedding was solemnised. The contracting parties were Miss Ellen Irvine, of Rathmullan, Downpatrick, and Mr. Samuel Wilson, of Hamilton, New Zealand, recently demobilised from the New Zealand Army. The minister, Rev. R. Philipson, conducted the cere-

mony, and was assisted by Rev. R. M'Elney (Presbyterian), and Rev. J. Deacon (Church of Ireland). A large wedding party motored to Belfast, and were entertained at the Carlton Café.

* *

Dunmurry.—Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held here on the 2nd ult., and were much enjoyed by all. The pastor loci (Rev. J. A. Kelly) officiated in the morning, and Rev. M. Watkins, of Mountpottinger, in the afternoon, and there were good attendances at both Services. Mr. Adam Parkes, of Belfast, gave great satisfaction at the organ, and solos were given in a finished manner by Miss Molyneaux, Messrs. Potter, D. Ervine, and Joseph Conkey. The thanks of the Minister and Congregation are due and hereby expressed to Mr. Watkins and the musical friends just mentioned for their great kindness on the interesting occasion, and at the same time to those who contributed to the adornment of the old and historic meeting-house.

* *

Larne and Kilwaughter.—On Preparation Sunday, October 26th, Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held here, and collections taken up on behalf of Larne Nursing Society. The congregations were large, even the evening one, although no notice had been given unless from the pulpit, and although a well advertised service was being held simultaneously in Gardenmore Presbyterian Church. The Services in every department were of the usual solemn, devout character, and without such showy features as solos. The decorations were confined to specimens of wheat and flowers artistically arranged and quite sufficient to suggest the bounties and glories of Providence in harvest. But a most touching feature consisted of a classic chaplet of evergreens surmounted by a cross worked in wheat suspended over the Roll of Honour in the hall, on which are inscribed the names of those, fully 40 in number, who perilled life and limb in the war, and including 14 names of those mourned and held in affectionate remembrance by Minister and Congregation alike who made the supreme sacrifice.

Theodore Parker is credited with saying that Unitarians are constantly crying "work," work," seldom "joy," joy." Somewhat relieved of the agony of the war, we are in some degree setting ourselves free from this reproach, and in our Unity Guild, which meets monthly, enjoying the relaxations, etc., etc., of social intercourse. The same pleasurable excitements are in great measure realized in our Work Guild, which meets more frequently and combines pleasure with work in anticipation of our summer fête.

* *

Moira.—On Sunday 26th October our Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held, that in the morning conducted by the minister. In the evening a crowded congregation listened with marked attention to the Rev. J. A. Kelly, of Dunmurry. Mr. Worth kindly came out as usual from Belfast with a party of musical friends, whose contributions to the brightness of both services were highly appreciated. We regret that many were unable to obtain admission to the crowded church. The collections were larger than usual.

* *

Moneyrea.—A very interesting gathering was held in the Lyttle Memorial School, on Friday, November 14th, for the purpose of making a presentation to Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Millen. The proceedings began with a programme of songs and recitations, the artistes including the Misses Newman (Bloomfield), Miss Cunningham (Belfast), Miss Frame (Comber), Rev. M. Watkins, and Mr. Gordon Watson. After the programme, tea was partaken of, at which a toast to Mr. and Mrs. Millen was proposed by Mr. Turkington, and seconded by Mr. W. J. O. Abernethy. The presentations followed—to Mr. Millen was presented an address and case of Treasury notes. The address read as follows:—"Dear Mr. Millen,—We, the members of the Non-Subscrib-

ing Presbyterian Church of Moneyrea, wish to record our sincere appreciation of your services during the past fifteen years in our midst. You have shown a consistent zeal in the welfare of our Church life, an active interest in our Sunday School as teacher and treasurer, and in your capacity as Principal of the National School of Moneyrea you have merited and received the esteem of all who have been privileged to receive your tuition. We appreciate your interest in our choir, your influence and example in the cause of temperance, and your willing assistance at our social entertainments. We ask your acceptance of this address and purse of Treasury notes as a token of our esteem and goodwill toward yourself, your wife, and your family, and we trust that with God's blessing you may long remain in our midst and enjoy health, happiness, and prosperity. Signed on behalf of the Congregation, A. Whitford (Minister), Robert Frame, A. K. Stewart, S. Mehaffy, R. J. Simpson, J. Blair, H. Frame, W. Orr, W. J. Abernethy, James Boucher, J. Lamont (chairman), R. Kennedy (Treasurer), S. M. Turkington (Secretary)." In making the presentation, Miss M. J. Miskelly spoke very appreciatively of the work of Mr. Millen, and asked his acceptance of the address and Treasury notes as a recognition of his services by the Congregation. Mr. James Frame, on behalf of the ladies of the Congregation, then asked Mrs. Milen's acceptance of a "Singer" sewing machine. In a very able speech Mr. Frame remarked upon the sincerity which had prompted this gift to Mrs. Millen. With the gift she received the kind wishes of all. In responding, Mr. and Mrs. Millen expressed their thanks to the Congregation for their kindness. To both the joy of service was itself sufficient reward for anything they had done. Nevertheless, they would cherish the gifts presented to them, and much appreciated the kind thoughts which had prompted so generous a recognition of their labours. A letter of apology for absence was received from our esteemed friend Mr. Stewart; illness prevented his being present; nevertheless the occasion received his hearty support. Mr. Stewart was able, as Manager of the Moneyrea National School, and as a member of the Church Committee, to testify to the efficiency of Mr. Millen's services, and wished the gathering every success. Speeches were made by Mr. Turkington and Mr. W. Orr on behalf of the Church Committee; by Mr. John Boucher on behalf of the choir; Miss M'Graw on behalf of the Sunday School, and Mr. Robert Simpson on behalf of the Temperance Guild; Rev. J. G. Davies, and Rev. M. Watkins. A dance brought the proceedings to a close. The gathering will live among the members of Moneyrea Church as one of the happiest and most enjoyable it has been their privilege to attend.

* *

Newry.—The opening meeting for Session 1918-19 of this Guild was held in the Schoolroom of the Unitarian Church, Needham Place, on a Tuesday evening recently. The edifice had been nicely decorated with flags and mottoes by Mr. Joseph Mitchell, junr., and there was a large attendance of the members and their friends. The tea tables were presided over by Mrs. Slipper, Mrs. Robert Lockhart, Altnaveigh; Mrs. Dalton, Miss Berry and Miss Mitchell, who were assisted by a number of stewards. After tea, the Rev. George J. Slipper, the popular minister of the Church, took the chair, and said he was pleased to see so many members of the Congregation present, and also a good number of the members of other Churches whom he welcomed on behalf of the Guild. He hoped they would have many interesting meetings there throughout the coming winter evenings. The following musical programme was then gone through:—Pianoforte solo, Miss Lambe; song, Mr. Jack Heather; pianoforte solo, Miss May Cleland; hoop-dance, Miss Susan Lockhart; reading, Mr. E. W. Flack; song, Mr. Campbell Gray. All the items were much appreciated and loudly applauded. A sketch, entitled;

"Tilda's New Hat," was then gone through in a first-class manner, and created great merriment. The following took part in the performance :—Mrs. Dalton, Miss Berry, Miss Ina M'Combe, and Mr. Megaw. Votes of thanks to all who had taken part in the evening's proceedings and to the ladies who were responsible for the getting up of the entertainment having been passed, games were indulged in by the young people for a time, and the evening's proceedings, which were very enjoyable throughout, was brought to a close by the singing of the National Anthem.

The services in the First Presbyterian (Unitarian) Church, Needham Place, Newry, on a recent Sunday were thanksgiving services for the blessings of harvest. The church was beautifully decorated for the occasion, and both services, especially the evening, were largely attended. The choir was augmented for the occasion, and at the Evening Service, in addition to harvest hymns, two anthems were most pleasingly rendered, viz.—"Ye shall dwell in the land" (Stainer), the solos being taken by Mr. A. S. Rigby and Miss Littlewood; and "Praise the Lord O Jerusalem" (Maunders), the solo being rendered by Mr. Gilbert Adamson. Mrs. Slipper presided at the organ. The Rev. George J. Slipper, the Minister of the Congregation, was the preacher at both services, and his discourses were of an appropriate and instructive character. The offertories were on behalf of the Church Funds. A Praise Service was held in the church next night, and at the close there was a produce sale in the schoolroom.

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